

The Rhode Island State Guide Plan (SGP)

The Statewide Planning Program of the Department of Administration is charged by Rhode Island General Law 42-11-10 and 12 with preparing and maintaining plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state. The State Guide Plan is prepared and maintained by the Statewide Planning Program as a means for setting and centralizing state policies concerning the natural resources of the State and the economic, physical and social development of the State.

The SGP is not a single document but a collection of plans that have been separately adopted and updated over time. The SGP currently contains thirty elements, which are grouped into functional areas. Additional information on and the elements of the SGP can be found on the Statewide Planning web page address at the following *URL*:

< <http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/sgp.htm> >.

In order to determine consistency with the SGP, a water allocation program should to address the following SGP Elements that concern water supply and environmental resources.

- Element 110: Goals and Policies
- Element 121: Land Use and Policies Plan
- Element 162: Rivers policy and Classification Plan
- Element 721: Water Supply Policies for RI
- Element 722; Water Supply Plan for RI
- Element 723: Water Emergency Response Plan
- Element 724: Drought Management Plan

The following pages are a listing of goals, policies and recommendations from the SGP elements that relate to establishing priorities for water.

ELEMENT 110: GOALS AND POLICIES

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/110.pdf>>

Goals

D. Facilities and Services

GOAL 2: COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THE STATE'S PUBLIC WATER RESOURCES

1. Base priority for development of water resources on all factors associated with both the sources and the contemplated uses.
5. Maximize the re-use of water required for industrial processing.

ELEMENT 121: STATE LAND USE POLICIES AND PLAN

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/121.pdf>>

Goals

4. Environment

Guide the development of land and water to produce a healthful, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Water Resources Water Supply

W 2. Manage and develop surface and ground water supply resources in a coordinated and efficient manner on a state, local, and regional level, considering long term needs and environmental impacts.

W-5. Promote efforts to match the quality of water used by major consumers and/or water use sectors with the water quality level required for such uses in order to conserve our highest quality existing and potential drinking water supplies.

Recommendations

9-2-1 Water Supply

1. Because a healthful drinking water supply is essential, protections of the land resources must be designed to safeguard water supplies.

5. Require where feasible the recycling of water used for industrial and commercial purposes. Study the feasibility of use of wastewater treatment plant effluent for industrial and agricultural use, and study the feasibility of using metropolitan area aquifers for some industrial and commercial water needs.

ELEMENT 162: RIVERS POLICY AND CLASSIFICATION PLAN

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/162.pdf>>

Policies

H. Water Withdrawals (Water Supply Management)

Policy R-9 Water withdrawals shall be managed comprehensively within individual watersheds in accordance with this plan's classifications.

ELEMENT 721: WATER SUPPLY POLICIES FOR RHODE ISLAND

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/721.pdf>>

Objectives

The key objective of the plan is to develop long range policies that protect water quantity and quality in the most cost-effective and environmentally sound manner. It identifies goals, formulates policies, and recommends action based on sound strategies deemed essential to maintaining existing and protecting future water supplies.

In planning for Rhode Island's water supply, the following basic premises must be accepted concerning water-related issues.

- ▶ Water is a limited resource and, as such, shall be equitably managed for all users and purposes under a process that emphasizes efficiency of use and management, protection of existing and potential supplies, and other techniques to ensure that water is available in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the state's current and future needs.

- It is in the public interest to protect the purity of present and future drinking water supplies by requiring maximum protection of reservoirs and aquifers, and to support regional efforts to manage watersheds and recharge areas of drinking water supplies.
- Although drinking water supplies are of sufficient quantity to meet our current needs improved system management and implementation of demand management measures will support the enhanced utilization of sustainable resources to meet Rhode Island's future potable water requirements.
- As a primary caretaker for water resources, the state has a responsibility to address water resource utilization issues in a manner that adequately protects the health, safety, and welfare of the general public; continues to support growth and economic development of the state; and improves the quality of life in Rhode Island in a cost-efficient and environmentally sound manner.
- Maximizing water supply potential should not present unresolvable conflicts with competing interests; adoption of state laws and policies must consider the needs and objectives of state agencies, water suppliers, and other private and public interests.

Goals

Supply Management

S-1 Water systems shall strive to provide water that is of the highest quality practical. However, where feasible and appropriate, water shall be matched to the quality necessary for that purpose. (Reuse of water is encouraged where feasible and appropriate).

Element 721 continued:

S-9 Municipalities shall balance the use of land and water resources in cooperation with local water supplier(s) serving their respective jurisdictions by considering:

- balancing new development with available water supply;
- encouraging development that utilizes the existing infrastructure;
- considering cumulative impacts of development within watersheds and recharge areas;
- considering safe yield and capacity of the water supply and delivery system within community comprehensive plans;
- discouraging the formation of new small water systems;
- efficiently utilizing existing supply sources;
- protecting water quality through local land use and zoning or other appropriate means and methods.

Planning and Administrative Management

P-1 Water for drinking and the sustenance of life shall be the priority use while striving to protect other uses and considering public health, safety, and the overall economic wellbeing of the state.

Strategies

The policies in this plan support the formation of a sustainable water future, with clear criteria and strategies for working toward it. The strategies, viewed as a toolbox of practical steps supporting the policies, identify specific initiatives to be achieved at local, municipal, and state levels. The objective is to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem that is the backbone of continued viability, and ensure that water is available in both sufficient water quality and quantity to meet present and future needs essential to the enjoyment and improvement of quality of life in Rhode Island.

722: WATER SUPPLY PLAN FOR RI

URL <not available>

Does not contain policies or recommendations related to priority uses.

723: WATER EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/723.pdf>>

Goals

The goals of the plan are to assure:

- protection of public health, safety, and welfare;
- conservation of essential drinking water resources;
- the reasonable allocation of supply; and
- support of essential and high priority uses.

ELEMENT 724: RHODE ISLAND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN

URL <<http://www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/724.pdf>>

Policies

Short-term

The *Drought Management Plan* policies, goals and strategies should be viewed within the context of the four over-arching goals of *The Water Emergency Response Plan*, which seeks to assure:

1. Protection of public health, safety and welfare;
2. Conservation of essential drinking water resources;
3. The reasonable allocation of water supply; and
4. Support of essential and high priority water uses.

Element 724 continued:

Objectives

Long-term

2. Allocate high quality water first to uses that require that quality.

Strategies

Strategies for Policy and Legislative Actions (Implementation: Water Resources Board & General Assembly)

1. Develop a water allocation policy consistent with *the Drought Management Plan* and as recommended by State Guide Plan 721, *Water Supply Policies*.

Goals

The goals of the Plan are organized into two sections, one for short-term and one for long-term goals. The short-term goals of the Plan are:

D-ST-1. Minimize the effects of drought on public health and safety, economic activity, and environmental resources.

D-ST-2. Preserve the water supply of the state.

The long-term drought goal is to reduce Rhode Island's vulnerability to periods of low precipitation (or long-term drought).